



The Secretary of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

September 8, 1998

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIAL OFFICERS AND HEADS of FIELD ELEMENTS

FROM:

BILL RICHARDSON *Bill Richardson*

SUBJECT:

Administration's Clean Water Initiative

In his 1998 State of the Union Address, President Clinton announced a major initiative to clean our rivers, lakes, and coastal waters. The Clean Water Action Plan, released by the President on February 19, 1998, outlines the Administration's long-term vision for addressing water pollution challenges. This Action Plan, developed as a cooperative effort among Federal agencies, represents the single, largest commitment to the task of cleaning up the Nation's waters since the enactment of the Clean Water Act in 1972.

The Action Plan emphasizes a collaborative approach to watershed management in which Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments, businesses, and the public form partnerships to identify watersheds with the most critical water quality problems and then work together to implement innovative strategies to deal with the problems. The Action Plan also establishes initiatives to reduce public health threats, improve stewardship of natural resources, strengthen control of polluted runoff, and make water quality information more accessible to the public.

As a Federal land management agency and the fourth largest Federal land owner in the country, the Department must be a responsible steward of national resources. There are many ways that the Department can help meet the challenges to the integrity of the Nation's water resources. I am directing the Acting Assistant Secretary for Environment, Safety and Health to work with you to develop an implementation plan that will identify actions the Department voluntarily can take to champion this important Administration initiative.

In this time of shrinking budgets, we need to accomplish our energy and national security missions along with our environmental stewardship functions in the most cost-effective manner possible. The Action Plan provides a framework for opportunities to work with States, Tribes, local governments, other Federal

agencies, and industry to leverage limited resources to achieve needed improvements in water quality. A watershed management approach can be an important tool in managing the Department's lands and facilities and in implementing land use plans. Existing site advisory boards and site land use planning boards can be valuable partners in identifying and implementing activities related to the Action Plan's goals.

The Department's pollution prevention programs provide many opportunities to conserve water and reduce waste generation and release of pollutants into the watersheds surrounding our facilities. Additionally, a number of our facilities already have ongoing or planned partnerships or working relationships with States, Tribes, local communities, or other Federal agencies to strengthen existing clean water programs. I would like to take this opportunity to promote and encourage such efforts and to urge all Department elements to view the Clean Water Action Plan as a roadmap to help the Department plan its role in this national effort to assure clean water for all Americans. It is my hope that the Department will become a welcomed and valued member of community-based watershed partnerships by working collaboratively with neighboring communities towards the common goals of restoring and sustaining the watersheds where we work and live and by making technical assistance and water quality information readily accessible to local officials and the public.

Attachment

[Clean Water Action Plan](#)